

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CERAL HARVEST FORECAST, 1948/49

WHEAT	2,070,000 Acres	25,100,000 Bushels. ~	Average	12.13 Bushels.
BARLEY	660,000 "	11,500,000 "	"	17.42 "

Reports on their harvest prospects have been received from 2,754 farmers representing nearly 40% of the area sown.

ACREAGES: - The following table shows the total areas under wheat barley and oats for all purposes, i.e. for grain, hay or green fodder for 1930-31 and several later years. It shows also the areas that farmers had intended to sow for season 1948/49 and the areas now estimated to have ^{been} sown. This latter area is subdivided under the respective headings of grain, hay and green fodder with comparative figures shown for 1947/48. An additional line shows the areas that are estimated to have failed entirely or were fit only for grazing. These areas have been apportioned between the grain and green fodder areas according to the purpose for which it was estimated they were sown.

		Wheat Acres	Barley Acres	Oats Acres	Total Acres
Total area sown	1930-31	4,507,213	267,369	519,300	5,293,882
	1939-40	2,948,110	558,559	834,793	4,341,462
	1943-44	1,675,778	304,382	563,565	2,543,725
	1944-45	1,850,682	402,700	664,456	2,917,818
	1945-46	2,407,253	479,384	686,128	3,572,765
	1946-47	2,662,150	520,027	485,736	3,667,913
	1947-48	2,486,505	580,682	559,931	3,627,118
Area intended for	1948-49	2,230,000	700,000	680,000	3,610,000
Now estimated for	1948-49	2,150,000	675,000	600,000	3,425,000
For Grain (a)	1948-49	2,070,000	660,000	410,000	3,140,000
	1947-48	2,374,873	562,405	308,783	3,246,061
For Hay	1948-49	70,000	2,000	100,000	172,000
	1947-48	106,404	2,711	149,461	256,576
Green Fodder (a)	1948-49	10,000	13,000	90,000	113,000
	1947-48	5,228	15,566	101,687	122,481
(a) Failed areas included		170,000	30,000	135,000	335,000

Although the areas sown with wheat decreased practically continuously from 1930-31 (the maximum year) to 1943-44, barley and oats increased until 1939-40 after which they also decreased to 1943-44. Although the areas under wheat decreased from 1930-31 to 1943-44, during the same period the number of sheep increased from 5,980,959 to 10,359,669 and cattle from 218,985 to 414,997, while there were increased plantings of flax, peas, vegetables, barley, oats, etc.

After the fall in acreage to 1943-44, there were fairly substantial increases in the areas sown to wheat, barley and oats for 1944-45 and 1945-46 and during those years there were decreases in live-stock - principally due to drought losses. In 1946-47 there were further increases for wheat and barley but oats decreased to the lowest acreage since 1932-33 - probably due to the good season for natural feed - while the numbers of cattle and sheep made substantial recovery. Barley and oats areas increased for 1947-48 and 1948-49 and wheat decreased. The areas harvested for each cereal show that farmers cropped lesser acreages than they intended.

RAINFALL ETC.

The 1948-49 season had a splendid opening, except for the Western and Upper North Divisions. The average rainfall over the Agricultural Areas for April was 188 points, being practically double the 43 year's mean of 95 points. The April rains were the best since 1938. May with 144 (164) points was slightly below normal, while June 105 (199) and July 139 (195) points were decidedly below normal. The dry period continued during the first half of August but there were good general rains during the latter half and the month's total was 207 (191) points. Unfortunately this improved period was followed by a very dry September with only 45 (161) points, and this dry spell continued into October. However, good rains fell on October 10 and 11, and these were followed by further good falls during the balance of the month and into the first half of November. The total average recordings were:- October 213 (127) and November 145 (97) points. Early in October the wheat yield was being estimated at as low as 7 or 8,000,000 bushels but the closing weeks of the season were so favorable (good rains, cool weather and very little damage from rust, haydie etc.) that 25,100,000 bushels are now forecast. This is the opposite to the previous season, when earlier prospects were for a yield approaching 15,000,000 bushels but the crops were so affected by rust, etc. that the actual yield was only 32,524,422 bushels.

Although the average rainfall over the Agricultural Areas for the wheat-growing period April to November 1186 (1229) points was not quite equal to the mean, the average wheat yield per acre of 12.13 bushels exceeded the 43 years' mean of 10.73 bushels. The increased average wheat yield undoubtedly was due to the October-November falls of 358 (224) points assisted by the April-May opening falls of 332 (259) points, because the intervening period of June-September had only 496 (746) points, or just two-thirds of the mean.

The divisional April-November rainfalls and wheat averages for 1948 compared with the 43 years' mean were:- Central 1599 (1567) points 17.43 (13.58) bushels; Lower North 1232 (1187) points 17.49 (14.63) bushels; South Eastern 2074 (1923) points 21.52 (14.05) bushels; Murray Mallee 1155 (1002) points 8.20 (7.29) bushels; Upper North 569 (842) points 9.73 (9.39) bushels; and Western 910 (1076) points 6.80 (7.39) bushels.

WHEAT:- The estimated yield of 25,100,000 bushels of wheat compares with 32,524,422 in 1947-48 and with an average of 26,903,775 during the previous 10 years. The estimated yield per acre is 12.13 bushels compared with 13.70 in 1947-48.

BARLEY: The estimated yield is 11,500,000 bushels compared with the record crop of 15,363,461 in 1947-48 and the ten years' mean of 7,960,760. The average per acre is 17.42 compared with 27.32 in 1947-48. The 1948-49 Season did not favor the development of very heavy barley crops, besides which considerable damage was done by storms which occurred during the second week of November. These factors account for the above decrease of 9.90 bushels per acre compared with the previous season. The average yield per acre has been exceeded in several recent seasons but, due to the fact that the acreage was the highest on record, the total yield was exceeded only by the record of 1947-48. It is understood that, as happened last year, barley crops are exceeding the farmers' estimates.

OATS:- It is always difficult to estimate the yield of oats but the total expected yield is 3,100,000 bushels compared with the record crop of 5,394,261 in 1947-48 and the 10 years' mean of 3,042,204. The average per acre is 7.56 compared with 17.47 in 1947-48. The late spring rains benefited the 1948-49 oat crops, but this benefit was counterbalanced by the damage done by the November storms.